

# Who Visits World Heritage?

## A Comparative Analysis of Three Cultural Sites

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**Abstract:**

Heritage tourism is a growing segment of the modern tourism industry, and several studies have been undertaken to identify the individuals who participate in this type of tourism. These have indicated that heritage tourists, generally, are middle class, middle age, and well educated. However, despite their iconic role, there has been relatively little attention paid to profile of visitors to World Heritage Sites. This study aims to better understand the demography of this specific tourism segment through the use of survey-based research at three geographically-diverse World Heritage Sites: Independence Hall in the USA, Studenica Monastery in Serbia, and the Archaeological Site of Volubilis in Morocco. Through the use of descriptive statistics, several over-arching trends were noted among the three sites. World Heritage site visitors were found to be very well educated, but they did not have any similarities in relation to age, income, or residence, which contrasts the 'general' heritage tourist typology. However, there were several World Heritage specific trends. While this work is a snapshot of the three sites under study and thus is difficult to generalize, it provides the basis for more comprehensive demographic research on visitors to World Heritage sites.

**Keywords:** World Heritage; heritage tourism; demographics; cultural heritage; market segmentation; cultural tourism

## **Introduction**

The World Heritage List arose from the drafting of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1972, and the first twelve sites were listed in 1978, eight of which were cultural and four natural. The list has grown substantially since then, with 1007 listed sites as of the end of 2014 of which 779 are cultural, 197 natural, and 31 mixed (UNESCO, n.d.-a). As heritage tourism is increasingly regarded a significant tool for economic development (OECD, 2009; Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009), World Heritage site inscription has become an aim of many countries seeking to improve their visibility and, consequently, their tourism income (Ashworth and van der Aa, 2009; Millar, 2009; Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009). Therefore, from a heritage tourism marketing and management perspective it becomes necessary to understand the market segments of visitors to World Heritage sites to help provide both positive tourist experiences and assist site conservation (Hall and MacArthur, 1998).

Market segmentation is essential as “it can aid planning and lead to increased sales, lower costs and higher profitability. In particular, it helps marketers identify ‘prospects’, get closer to their customers and allows them to call smaller groups of customers their own” (Morgan and Pritchard, 2000, p. 151). This is especially relevant in relation to tourism destinations as they need to provide a distinct product from their competitors in order “to attract industry and commerce and sustain the economic and social development of their inhabitants” (Baker and Cameron, 2008, p. 94). Moreover, these distinct products have to attract a required number of consumers in order to be deemed successful, and segmentation assists in this process. In fact, “one of the problems

in marketing culture to tourists is that destinations often try and market their culture in general, offering a wide range of products, when many ‘cultural tourists’ are interested in much more specific experiences” (OECD, 2009, p. 56). This is particularly true when marketing World Heritage sites as they fall under the purview of a unified brand (Hall and Piggin, 2003), even if the actual experiences at each site are highly varied.

There have been a number of studies that focus on the demographic attributes of heritage tourists in general (e.g. Chandler and Costello, 2002; Huh et. al., 2006; Kerstetter et. al., 2001; Light and Prentice, 1994; Nguyen and Cheung, 2014; Ramkissoon and Uysal, 2011; Richards, 2007; Sánchez-Cañizares and López-Guzmán, 2012). However, there has been little research into the more specific group of visitors who frequent World Heritage sites, especially in regards to their demographic characteristics. In fact, the demographic traits of tourists found at World Heritage sites appear to have never been directly addressed. When demographic profiles are used in World Heritage studies, they are usually presented in relation only to the actual aspect of World Heritage visitation under analysis (e.g. King and Prideaux, 2010; Paulau-Saumell et al., 2012). Therefore, an examination of World Heritage tourists’ demographic profile is potentially valuable in order to assist those researchers who deal specifically with this niche segment of heritage tourism, and is an especially important starting point in understanding the potential differences, if any, between general heritage tourists and those who visit World Heritage sites.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Heritage Tourists***

According to Timothy and Boyd (2006), “heritage tourism, which typically falls under the purview of cultural tourism (and vice versa), is one of the most notable and widespread types of tourism and is among the oldest forms of travel” (p. 1). Richards (in OECD, 2009, p. 21) estimated that in 2007 approximately 40% of all international arrivals were composed of cultural tourists, resulting in three hundred and fifty-nine million total cultural trips. Based on its level of significance, it is therefore very important to understand the makeup of this particular tourism segment.

Light and Prentice (1994) found that, on average, “heritage consumers tend to be from the middle classes, well educated, middle-aged, in a group without children, on holiday away from home, and with a prior interest in history” (p. 112). These findings have been replicated in more recent studies, which would seem to indicate that there is a general heritage tourist type. For example, Chandler and Costello (2002) stated that “the ‘average’ respondent at each site was a middle-aged (between ages 35 and 63) college graduate who was employed full-time and married with older children” (p. 163). Kerstetter et al. (2001) presented similar demographic results with 69% of their respondents indicating that they were between 30 and 59 years old and over half of their sample having at least a college degree. They also could be identified as middle class due to 58% of their sample exceeding an income of \$40,000 per annum. In a comparison of heritage and non-heritage tourists, Martin et al. (2004) determined that age was the only difference between the two groups as “cultural heritage visitors were about 5 years older on average than other visitors” (p. 131). The visitors in the research undertaken by Huh et

al. (2006) had similar characteristics to the previous studies. They were generally middle aged with 60.3% between the ages of 38 and 57, and they had high levels of education, wherein 87.6% had at least a university degree. Furthermore, the largest group of visitors at 44.8% of the total sample indicated having high-income levels of \$80,000 or more, which would suggest that a middle class background. This was also one of the few studies to provide demographic data related to the visitors' residences (domestic/foreign), and they discovered that domestic visitors were the largest group at the site, with only 4.5% coming from abroad.

Nguyen and Cheung (2014) presented another study in which the visitors' residence was discussed, and their results contrasted those found in Huh et al. (2006) as three-quarters of the sample was foreign in origin, with more than half arriving from Europe. In contrast to the other studies, they indicated that there was an even of international visitors distribution between the ages of 20 and 60, and between 20 and 40 for the domestic visitors, as opposed to a strong representation within the middle-aged category. A difference in relation to ages is also noted in Richards (2007), which reports the findings of the 2007 ATLAS survey. However, unlike Nguyen and Cheung's (2014) even distribution, the ATLAS research determined that 30% of the total sample was between the ages of 20 and 29, which presents a much younger heritage tourist profile. However, both Richards (2007) and Nguyen and Cheung (2014) indicated that there were high levels of education among their sample respondents with the majority in both cases having at least a university degree. While there are some exceptions, the previous research generally reinforces the depiction of the 'general' heritage tourist visitor profile as middle aged, middle class, and, especially, well educated.

### ***World Heritage Visitors***

World Heritage tourism can be understood as a specific brand segment of the broader heritage tourism phenomenon (Hall and Piggin, 2003), but there are very few studies that address the demographic aspects of World Heritage site visitation. King and Prideaux (2010, p. 243), based on their data related to Australian World Heritage, stated that “there were no consistent set of variables that may be collectively used to determine if a person has a predisposition towards collecting World Heritage Areas” (p. 243). However, when they independently analyzed each demographic variable, they did find that women had a marginally higher inclination to visit a World Heritage Area based on its designation. Furthermore, they state that “the odds increase by a factor of 1.4 of international visitors choosing to visit an area specifically labeled World Heritage compared to Australian visitors” (King and Prideaux, 2010, p. 244). Remoaldo et al. (2014, p. 96f) also noted that women were slightly more likely to visit a World Heritage Site than their male counterparts, with 63% of their sample composed of female respondents. They also indicated that education was a distinctive variable as 86.7% had at least an undergraduate degree. Additionally, 48.2% of the same sample was between the ages of twenty-six and forty-five, though this was not found to be significant (Remoaldo et al., 2014, p. 96f). The visitors sampled in Paulau-Saumell et al. (2012) were similar in age to those seen in the previous study with the majority of visitors falling between 25 and 54 years of age, and 65.34% of all visitors sampled indicated that they possessed a university degree. However, in contrast to both King and Prideaux (2010) and Remoaldo et al. (2014), gender was not a significant variable and visitors were fairly evenly distributed between male and female.

The role of gender, or lack thereof, in the final study is more in line with its importance in terms of general heritage tourism segmentation (Huh et al., 2006; Nguyen and Cheung, 2014; Richards, 2007). The higher levels of education and general participation of middle-aged individuals in World Heritage tourism activities are also similar to the trends already noted in terms of the average heritage tourist. However, there is a significant difference between the residence of the visitors in relation to either general heritage or World Heritage sites. While heritage tourists are noted in Huh et al. (2006) as being predominantly domestic in nature, World Heritage visitors appear to have a higher relative probability of being international tourists. Based on these noted similarities and differences within the existing literature, it will be interesting to note how well surveyed individuals within this work will coincide with these previously noted demographic characteristics.

## **Methodology**

The results presented in this paper are derived from a larger study. Three cultural sites (Independence Hall, USA; Studenica Monastery, Serbia; Archaeological Site of Volubilis, Morocco) were selected based on certain specific criteria: geographic position, level of human development, and specificities of the cultural attraction. The sites were required to be located in geographically diverse locations, which in this case consisted of North America, Europe, and North Africa. Additionally, the sites were located in countries with different levels of human development, based on the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index. Based on the countries' rankings, the USA is more developed, Serbia moderately developed, and Morocco less developed. These criteria were used in order to note if there were certain trends that



overrode geographical specificities. Additionally, the three sites were also required to fulfil certain site-specific requirements. Namely, they had to be listed under the first six UNESCO criteria, which are distinctly cultural, and have defined entry and exit points in order to ensure that all potential survey respondents had visited the site.

The format for the segment focusing on demographic data collection was derived from the 2007 North American version of the ATLAS Cultural Tourism survey, with the exception of the Serbian version, which used the 2007 Serbian language version of the same survey. Certain elements of the ATLAS survey were irrelevant for the research undertaken and were subsequently deleted. The remaining demographic questions dealt with sex, residence, age, education level, employment status, and income level. The question related to residence focused on whether the respondents were from the local area, the rest of the country, or abroad, and, if they responded abroad, they were required to write in which country they resided. Furthermore, the researcher added one question related to travel party size.

As there was no data in terms of average number of visitors to each site prior to the commencement of the sampling period, there was no way to determine the population which resulted in a lack of a pre-determined sample size. Due to this missing data, it was necessary to utilize a convenience sampling method. This allowed for the surveying of visitors to the individual sites upon completion of their visit. These visitors were asked if they wished to respond to the survey, and there was a concerted effort to avoid any bias in the selection of individuals, especially in terms of residence (i.e. international or domestic). Richards (2010) notes that “surveying all visitors enables an analysis to be made of the relationship between different visitor groups and to contrast motivations,

behaviour and background of local residents and tourists” (p. 20).

The sampling period began at Independence Hall from July 31 to August 10, 2013, followed by Serbia from September 7 to September 21, 2013, and ending with Morocco from October 7 to October 21, 2013. Surveys were completed by the respondents in either English or the dominant language(s) of the country in which the site was located. Furthermore, at both Studenica Monastery and the Archaeological Site of Volubilis, sampling occurred within the confines of the site itself, while permission at Independence Hall was given only for the area near to the exit gate, but outside of the security perimeter. As has been previously mentioned, all sampling took place upon the completion of the respondents’ visits. This was deemed necessary as, prior to their visit, they may have seen the survey as taking time away from their site experience whereas afterwards they were assumed to be more relaxed with fewer time constraints. Upon completion of the raw data collection, it was processed and analysed with SPSS. The focus here is on frequency counts and percentages of each demographic element. Furthermore, all demographic elements which were found to exhibit similarities across the three sites were analysed using a multiple correspondence analysis in order to understand any potential relationship between these variables.

## **Case Studies**

### ***Independence Hall, USA***

Located in Center City, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Independence Hall is one of twenty-two World Heritage properties found in the United States of America, of which nine are strictly cultural in nature. While originally constructed as the seat of the colonial

government of Pennsylvania, the site is best known for its use during the American Revolution and the early years of the newly formed United States. It was there in 1776 that the Declaration of Independence was deliberated upon by the representatives and eventually adopted on July 4 with most signatures being made on August 2. On May 25, 1787, the Federal Constitutional Convention began in the exact same location where the Declaration of Independence had been signed over ten years earlier (Riley, 1954-1990, p. 23). The Convention came to a close on September 17, 1787 with the completion of the Constitution of the United States of America, which had been approved and signed by the states' representatives. In 1979, Independence Hall became a UNESCO World Heritage Site after initial nomination by the United States government, which had ratified the World Heritage Convention on December 7, 1973. "The United States...included Independence Hall in Philadelphia on the list it proposed for WHS [World Heritage Site] status, contending that not only was it the birthplace of the American republic, but that the events that took place in Philadelphia (the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution) had a continuing global impact in promoting democracy and self-government around the world" (Ryan and Silvanto, 2009, p. 295).

### ***Studenica Monastery, Serbia***

Situated in the south west of Serbia, approximately twelve kilometres from Usće, the Monastery of Studenica is one of four UNESCO sites found in the nation of Serbia. The others include Gamzigrad-Romuliana, Palace of Galerius (listed in 2007), Stari Ras and Sopoćani (listed in 1979), and the Medieval Monuments in Kosovo (listed in 2004, inscribed on the list of World Heritage in Danger in 2006). With the exception of Gamzigrad, all the sites in Serbia are religious in nature, being either churches or

monasteries. Studenica is distinct as that it is one of the oldest monasteries in Serbia, with construction beginning in 1183 under the son of the first king of Serbia, Stefan Nemanja (Ćirković, 2004, p. 33; UNESCO, n.d.-c). Additionally, it is a typical example of the Raška style of architecture and functioned as a model for Stefan Nemanja's descendants (Ćirković, 1992, p. 130). Furthermore, within the monastery complex, "the King's Church houses the most beautiful murals painted by Michael and Eutychios. Not long after 1314 they painted a cycle of the Life of the Virgin Mary which is among the leading works of Byzantine art" (UNESCO, 2009). Studenica became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986 following the nomination by the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). After the Balkan Wars and breakup of Yugoslavia, Serbia's succession to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention took place on September 11, 2001 with Serbia maintaining two of the original eight World Heritage properties found in the former SFRY.

### ***Archaeological Site of Volubilis, Morocco***

The Archaeological Site of Volubilis is located three kilometres west of Moulay Idriss Zerhoun, the holiest city of Morocco, in the province of Meknès El Menzeh. The site was most likely inhabited from the Neolithic Period, but official habitation can be traced back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. (UNESCO, 1997, *Histoire de Volubilis*, p. 1). While initially a royal city of Mauritania, Volubilis, and Mauritania in general, fell under the direct control of the Roman Empire in 40 A.D. (Roller, 2003, p. 6). However, the Romans quickly abandoned the region in 285 for reasons unknown, leaving the town to the inhabitants who were predominantly Berber by this period (UNESCO, 1997, *Histoire de Volubilis*, p. 1). It experienced a very brief period as the Idrissid capital, but it was moved to Fes under Idris II (Jodin, 1987, p. 9; ICOMOS, 1997, p. 73). The town

remained inhabited until approximately the 11th century when it is believed that the Almoravid raids ended any remaining settlement on the site (ICOMOS, 1997, p. 73). A French archaeologist, De la Martinière, undertook initial excavation of the site from 1887 to 1892. Additional excavations occurred under the French Protectorate, beginning in 1915 under the insistence of the French Résident Général, Marshal Lyautey and did not end until 1941, and then recommenced after the end of the Second World War. Reconstruction of certain elements of the town occurred both before and after the Protectorate period, and work continues to this day on the site (ICOMOS, 1997, p. 74). Morocco ratified the World Heritage Convention on October 28, 1975, with the Archaeological Site of Volubilis being inscribed in 1997.

## **Results**

The first of the demographic characteristics under analysis dealt with gender distribution (See Table 1). In the USA, there were 9.4% more male respondents than female while there were only 5.8% more in Serbia. Morocco was the only site where there were more female respondents than male, with a difference of 5.6% in favor of female visitors. However, these can be seen as minor differences as there is no clearly dominant group at any site. These results do not appear to match the WH visitor tendency noted by Remoaldo et. al. (2014) and King and Prideaux (2010) due to the fairly evenly distributed sample of both male and female respondents. However, it is consistent with the observations made in Paulau-Saumell et al. (2012). Furthermore, this trend can be seen in other, non-World Heritage specific studies which dealt with the creation of a demographic “type” of cultural heritage tourist (Chandler and Costello, 2002; Huh et. al., 2006; Kerstetter et. al., 2001; Light and Prentice, 1994).

*<Table 1 Inserted Here>*

In terms of the residence of the tourists (see Table 2) there are several distinct trends that can be clearly noted. The first relates to the strong presence of domestic tourists at the US site, with only 26.5% indicating their residence as “Abroad.” This corresponds with general American tourism trends, specifically the dominance of domestic tourism in general at American sites, comprising over 96% of all tourism in the USA (U.S. Travel Association, 2013). This can be seen in part as part of the historical tradition in the USA of domestic tourism being the duty of all citizens and the strong discourse of nationalism in American tourism (Ioannides and Timothy, 2010, pp. 29-30). However, the actual quantity of 73.5% is quite large, even when compared with Serbia, which also has a strong domestic representation at 59.2%. Similarly to the United States, the domestic segment of Serbian tourism is quite large at 69.7% of total overnight stays in 2013 (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, n.d.). The strength of domestic visitation to Studenica Monastery can also in part be attributed to its strong religious and historical significance for the people of Serbia. However, given the general high levels of domestic tourism in both of these countries, these results can be seen as almost expected.

*<Table 2 Inserted Here>*

These translated into the regional dominance of North America for the US site and Europe for the Serbian site. The US site’s relational regional visitation is on par with its domestic visitation with a difference of only 4.1% between residence and regional visitation. This can in part be attributed to the position of Canadian visitors as the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest group at Independence Hall (See Table 3), with 3% of the total sampled

population. Europe was the second largest source region at 18.8%, and, as can be noted, the second and fourth source countries were Germany and the UK. For Studenica, Europe was the dominant region, but, in contrast to Independence Hall, 92.9% of visitors were residents of Europe, which, after accounting for the domestic visitors, resulted in 86.8% of all international visitors having European residence. This is represented in the top source countries as, following Serbia, the three largest are Germany, France, and Poland. The high level of European visitation is consistent with larger trends in Serbian tourism wherein more than 90% of overall arrivals are European in origin (UNWTO, n.d.). Thus, both Studenica and Independence Hall experienced not only high rates of domestic visitation, but they also can mark European, non-domestic visitation as their second largest source.

*<Table 3 Inserted Here>*

Morocco, instead, provides a stark contrast to these two sites in regards to domestic tourism as Moroccan respondents accounted for only 13.3% of the total. This could possibly be related to the fact that the modern Moroccan identity is strongly based in the country's Islamic history, which the site of Volubilis generally predates (For more on Moroccan identity, see Wyrzten, 2009). It should be noted that the third and fourth source countries were the USA and Australia, which is interesting given that, as with the other two sites, the largest proportion of foreign respondents were from Europe, comprising 52.6% of total visitation. The European visitation level at Independence Hall is fairly small when compared with the extremely high amount of domestic visitation, while the visitation at Studenica can most likely be attributed to geographical proximity as a European country itself. The strong presence of European tourists at Volubilis,

especially considering its very low levels of domestic visitation, can perhaps be tied to the colonial nature of the site itself. In fact, of the European respondents, the largest proportion, at 34.8% ( $n=49$ ), were from France, the former “protectors” of Morocco. In comparison, the next largest group was from the UK and comprised only 13.5% ( $n=19$ ) of the European visitors. The predominance of French tourists, the largest source country group with 18.1% of total surveyed visitors, matches overall tourism trends for Morocco as a whole. In fact, in 2010, French tourists alone accounted for 41.7% of all overnight hotel stays in Morocco (UNWTO, n.d.). As previously stated, this can most probably be linked to historical colonial connections, including those specifically pertaining to the markedly French interest in the archaeology of the site.

The distribution of ages was much more varied than that of residence, though there were still several similarities between the sites. Based on previous research regarding the average age of heritage tourists, it would be expected that the most populous group across all the sites would be that of the 30-39 and 40-49. However, this can only be seen in Serbia, wherein 43.7% of individuals were members of these categories. Moroccan respondents were diverse in their ages, with only 31.3% falling in the “middle aged” category. The results from the USA data are of particular interest as they show a large representation of the 20-29 age group at 37.8%. In a study undertaken by Kerstetter et al. (2001, p. 270), which focused on an historic trail in Pennsylvania, USA, only 6% of surveyed individuals were in the 20-29 age group while 52% were between the ages of 30 and 49. This demographic makeup does not exhibit itself in the data from the three sites, and, when all the data is combined, it is interesting to note that the 20-29 age group is still dominant, in general, having more than 25% representation



among all the individual sites. However, it should be noted that the over 60 group only had larger representation at 24.2% in Morocco, which makes the 20-29 age group the largest though not necessarily dominant. From this data, it would appear that the World Heritage tourist respondents in these cases are much younger than those found in other heritage tourism studies, though it does seem to follow the World Heritage trend noted by Remoaldo et. al. (2014).

*<Table 4 Inserted Here>*

The majority of visitors at all sites travelled in groups comprised of between two to five members. While this is the dominant group size across all locations, it should be noted that, when compared to the USA and Morocco, Serbia had a larger percentage of single travellers, which could in part be attributed to possible faith-based visits by local residents, as there was no distinction made between different types of visitors in terms of motivation. Additionally, both the Serbian and Moroccan sites have much higher levels of visitation from groups larger than ten people. For the Serbian site, these visitors would have been part of large bus tours which were given ample time to self-explore the monastery complex, as opposed to the USA where bus tours were often on extremely tight schedules with no time to respond to the survey. However, at Volubilis, while there were, in fact, many bus tours, there were also a large number of small tour groups with over ten visitors that arrived by van. These groups tended to be less structured and have more free time and thus were easier to survey than those on the larger bus tours. As can be seen, the number of individuals in groups with more than ten people may be much higher for all of these sites as the surveying method generally resulted in the exclusion of

large organized tours due to their very limited time to complete the survey as a result of the very tight scheduling involved in this type of group.

As has been mentioned, demographic analysis has found heritage tourists, including those that specifically visit World Heritage sites, to have higher levels of education than those who participate in other types of tourism activities (Huh et al., 2006; Kerstetter et al., 2001; Light and Prentice, 1994; Paulau-Saumell et al., 2012; Remoaldo et al., 2014). This is resoundingly true in terms of the results laid out in Table 4. At all sites, the vast majority of individuals had at least completed a Bachelor's degree, with 83.2% in the USA, 74% in Serbia, and 77.1% in Morocco. In fact, only one site actually had any significant visitation from any other group. At the Serbian site, 20% of the respondents indicated that secondary school was the highest level of education they had completed. While the Serbian case is interesting to note, the specific data related to the high percentage of college educated individuals confirms the observances of other researchers related to the importance of education in the selection of leisure activities.

In addition to these educational similarities, at all of the sites over 50% of the respondents identified themselves as employees or self-employed. This can be understood as a logical response rate due to the fact the majority of tourism-based leisure activities require at least some basic form of capital, either for entrance fees, which, in regards to these three sites, were only present in Morocco, transport to the location, or other various items necessary to complete the experience. The two sites that provided slightly differentiated data were Morocco and the USA. In Morocco, there was a higher percentage, 21.1%, of retirees, but it is unclear exactly why this would be the case at this specific site. However, the responses from the US highlight a different trend, with 22.1%

of respondents identifying themselves as students. As with the Moroccan site, there does not appear to be any particular reason behind the higher level of students at this particular site, though it could be seen to indicate the importance of education when deciding to visit a heritage site. This is supported by Light and Prentice (1994) who found that “heritage places are associated by both visitors and non-visitors with learning” (p. 98).

The distribution of household incomes among respondents from the US and Moroccan sites is illustrated in Table 5. The largest number of respondents in both the USA (33.3%) and Morocco (23.6%) indicated that their family unit earned more than one hundred thousand USD per annum. Also, while Morocco has a higher percentage of individuals who stated they had a household income less than five thousand USD per annum, more than half of the individuals who responded in both countries indicated household incomes in excess of fifty thousand USD. This resulted in 70% of individuals in the USA and 57.2% in Morocco exceeding this income threshold. This contrasts with the findings of Kerstetter et al. (2001) whose study of a heritage site in Pennsylvania, USA wherein the income groups over \$20,000 had almost equal levels of representation (p. 270). However, Huh et al. (2006) found that visitors to several heritage sites in Virginia, USA had higher incomes, with the most populous group indicating an income at least \$80,000 (p. 88). Additionally, it should be noted that, while undertaking the survey research in Morocco, this section proved occasionally problematic. It was at times difficult or impossible to receive responses, and the researcher was often told that it was rude to ask someone’s income. However, it can be stated from these observations that both of these sites conform to the demographic studies undertaken by other researchers in regards to the importance of at least middle class income in terms of heritage tourism.

*<Table 5 Inserted Here>*

While the USD was used as the reference currency in the USA and Morocco, the EUR was used in Serbia. Due to this factor, it is very difficult to make comparisons between the three case studies. However, as can be seen in Table 5.3, it can be noted that respondents in Serbia had much lower household incomes when compared with the other two sites. Whereas individuals surveyed in the USA and Morocco had higher representation above the fifty thousand USD point, the vast majority of respondents in Serbia fell into the lower income categories, with 71.4% indicating less than twenty thousand EUR per annum, or approximately less than twenty-eight thousand USD. As in Morocco, the visitors to the Serbian site displayed some reluctance when asked to indicate their income. However, there was also a marginally higher response rate, with only 13.46% of Serbian survey takers choosing to not answer this question in comparison with 15.5% of visitors to the Moroccan site. Specifically, it was mentioned by a Serbian visitor that it was inappropriate to ask these questions on church ground, as the surveying was undertaken within the confines of the monastery. Furthermore, the data related to income at this site appears to contradict the findings of the previous site in terms of higher income being related to heritage tourism. It would be interesting to understand if, perhaps, this site's religious importance accounts for the high visitation by individuals who have a lower household income and would not traditionally be motivated by heritage tourism.

*<Table 6 Inserted Here>*

Based on the similarities noted in the basic descriptive statistical analysis, the demographic variables related to the respondents' education levels, employment status, region of origin, and travel party size were put through a multiple correspondence analysis. The locations of the sites were included in the analysis used as reference variables. The two dimension scatterplot that resulted from this analysis is visible in Figure 1. As was to be expected, there were site-specific relationships visible within this plot. For example, visitors to the USA site were commonly North American in origin, as had already been mentioned in the analysis of the descriptive statistics, and respondents at the site in Morocco were more likely to be retired. However, the most interesting association of variables was found between near to the center of the plot without any correlation with a specific site. There is a visible relationship between visitors who indicated that they were employees or self employed, travelled in groups of two to five individuals, and had at least a bachelors degree. The proximity of these variables to one another on the scatterplot reinforces the similarities noted within the basic descriptive technique.

*<Figure 1 Inserted Here>*

## **Discussion**

Based in the presentation of the descriptive statistics, there are certain characteristics that are shared among all the sites while others do not appear to represent any particular trend. These differences are most noticeable in relation to the residence, age, or income level of the sample, which exhibited no overarching patterns. Both the US

and Serbian sites reflect the residence trends expressed in the general heritage tourism literature (Chandler and Costello, 2002; Huh et. al., 2006; Kerstetter et. al., 2001; Light and Prentice, 1994), specifically in the prevalence of domestic over international visitors. In contrast, the Moroccan site sample was more similar to that noted in the World Heritage specific demographics identified in King and Prideaux (2010) as the visitation was predominantly international in nature. In terms of the age of visitors, Moroccan respondents had a higher representation of over 60 year olds in comparison with the other two sites while the largest group of visitors in the USA were between the ages of 20 and 29. In fact, only Serbia exhibited the trends noted in the previous heritage studies, with a dominance of middle-aged individuals. While the largest group at all sites were between 20 and 29 years old, the actual distribution of visitors was too varied to indicate any specific trend that can be attributable to World Heritage visitors as a whole. Finally, the income levels of each site's sample indicate that while the majority of visitors to both the US and Moroccan sites could be considered middle class, over two-thirds of visitors to the Serbian site noted having much lower incomes than the other two sites, falling markedly short of middle class. As with the other two demographic characteristics, these marked differences prevent any sort of broader generalization in relation to World Heritage visitor trends.

While residence, age, and income level did not exhibit any particular pattern, there were several similarities found in relation to other demographic profiles. For instance, gender does not appear to play any role in terms of World Heritage visitation at all three sites, which is consistent with the trends within general heritage tourism (Chandler and Costello, 2002; Huh et. al., 2006; Kerstetter et. al., 2001; Light and

Prentice, 1994). Additionally, at all of the sites, Europeans were the largest source of non-domestic visitation, which is a new demographic aspect that has not previously been discussed in any of the World Heritage specific literature, although there is some support from the findings of Nguyen and Cheung (2014) in relation to general heritage tourists. However, it is interesting to note that this aspect did not exhibit any significant relationship to any other specific variable when the multiple correspondence analysis was undertaken, which contrasts with the other similar criteria related to travel party size, employment status, and education level.

Based on the descriptive statistics, most visitors were traveling in groups of between two to five individuals, and over half of respondents at all sites indicated that they were either employees or self-employed. The education level of the visitors was the final demographic characteristic that exhibited similarities across all the sites within the descriptive statistics. As has already been noted in both the general heritage tourism and the more specific, World Heritage literature, the average visitor is well educated with at least a university degree (Huh et al., 2006; Kerstetter et al., 2001; Light and Prentice, 1994; Paulau-Saumell et al., 2012; Remoaldo et al., 2014). This is fully supported by demographic results presented here as approximately two-thirds of visitors at each site had at least an undergraduate degree. Furthermore, all of the final characteristics when placed in the multiple correspondence analysis exhibited a close relationship with each other without being specific to any of the sites and instead falling closer to the center of the actual plot. This further highlights the potential broader trends that may exist among World Heritage visitors.

## **Conclusions**

According to Light and Prentice (1994), “no understanding of modern heritage tourism is complete without a consideration of the people who appropriate – or consume – developed heritage products” (p. 112). As can be seen in the literature presented here, there has been an effort to identify heritage tourists through demographic indicators, but there has been little attention up until this point on those who specifically visit World Heritage sites. The demographic presentation made here has attempted to fill this gap through the analysis of the demographics of various visitors from three varied cultural World Heritage sites. Based on the results of this research, it was determined that World Heritage visitors do have some similarities to the average heritage tourist presented in previous literature (Chandler and Costello, 2002; Huh et. al., 2006; Kerstetter et. al., 2001; Light and Prentice, 1994). This is especially notable in terms of the education levels exhibited by the visitors and which has been previously supported by World Heritage specific literature as well as the more general heritage studies (Huh et al., 2006; Kerstetter et al., 2001; Light and Prentice, 1994; Paulau-Saumell et al., 2012; Remoaldo et al., 2014). However, they also diverged from these pre-established types as there were no overarching trends among the visitors at all three sites in relation to age, residence, and income. This would appear to separate the World Heritage visitor from the average heritage tourist whose identity is based in part on being middle-class and middle aged and perhaps suggests the need to examine more specific factors related to location, level of integration into tourism networks, and even level of awareness of heritage significance.

Though the World Heritage site visitors differed from the heritage tourist, they did exhibit certain general trends in terms of demographic qualities. Based on the results



presented, World Heritage tourists come from both genders, are highly educated, are employed, and travel in smaller groups of two to five people. Furthermore, most international visitors in this study indicated that their residence was in Europe, which could indicate that World Heritage is particularly attractive to Europeans. This could potentially reflect the extent to which some aspects of World Heritage such as authenticity and cultural landscapes are seen as particularly European concepts (Aplin, 2007; Boniface, 2001; Hyland, 1995). These demographic traits are important in order to better understand the specific segment that is consuming the World Heritage product, especially if this segment differs significantly from that of general heritage tourists. While this work is only a snapshot of three specific sites and, thus, difficult to generalize in regards to World Heritage as a whole, the existence of these specific similarities across varied geographical regions supports the trend.

While this study focused on three specific World Heritage sites, it would be useful to provide a more accurate analysis of the demographic qualities of the World Heritage visitor segment by undertaking a larger study at World Heritage sites situated in diverse geographical locations in a manner similar to the ATLAS research project. This would allow for a more in depth and representative presentation of this tourist type, which would be particularly helpful to those who wish to market the sites. Furthermore, research of this nature could determine if there were any differences between those visitors who frequented natural sites in comparison with those at cultural, or even mixed sites.

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Table 1. Gender distribution

		USA		Serbia		Morocco	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender	Male	215	54.7	55	52.9	128	47.2
	Female	178	45.3	49	47.1	143	52.8

Table 2. Residence of visitors

		USA		Serbia		Morocco	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Residence	Local Area	50	12.7	10	9.7	10	3.7
	Rest of Country	239	60.8	51	49.5	26	9.6
	Abroad	104	26.5	42	40.8	235	86.7
Region	North America	301	77.6	4	4.0	36	13.4
	Europe	73	18.8	92	92.9	141	52.6
	Middle East	6	1.5	0	0	5	1.9
	Asia	4	1.0	3	3.0	7	2.6
	Latin America	2	.5	0	0	10	3.7
	Australia and Oceania	2	.5	0	0	31	11.6
	Africa	0	0	0	0	38	14.2

Table 3. Top four source countries for each site

USA	Serbia	Morocco
(1) USA	(1) Serbia	(5) France
(2) United Kingdom	(2) Germany	(6) Morocco
(3) Canada	(3) France	(7) USA
(4) Germany	(4) Poland	(8) Australia



Table 4. Additional demographic data

		USA		Serbia		Morocco	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Age	16-19	22	5.6	2	1.9	4	1.5
	20-29	149	37.8	28	27.2	68	25.3
	30-39	56	14.2	25	24.3	52	19.3
	40-49	58	14.7	20	19.4	29	10.8
	50-59	73	18.5	11	10.7	51	19.0
	>=60	36	9.1	17	16.5	65	24.2
Travel Party Size	Solo Traveler	25	6.3	12	11.8	9	3.3
	2-5	340	86.3	71	69.6	208	77.0
	5-10	27	6.9	8	7.8	33	12.2
	>10	2	.5	11	10.8	20	7.4
Education Level	Primary School	5	1.3	2	2.0	1	.4
	Secondary School	36	9.2	20	20.0	26	9.6
	Vocational Education	25	6.4	4	4.0	35	13.0
	Bachelors	168	42.9	49	49.0	95	35.2
	Masters/PhD	158	40.3	25	25.0	113	41.9
Employment	Employee	221	56.1	54	52.4	136	50.4
	Self Employed	44	11.2	16	15.5	47	17.4
	Retired	26	6.6	12	11.7	57	21.1
	Full Time Parent	8	2.0	0	0	2	.7
	Student	87	22.1	14	13.6	23	8.5
	Unemployed	8	2.0	7	6.8	5	1.9

Table 5. Income data for the USA and Morocco

		USA		Morocco	
		N	%	N	%
Income Level	5k USD or less	25	6.3	25	10.9
	5,001-10,000 USD	8	1.3	8	3.5
	10,001-20,000 USD	24	4.2	16	7.0
	20,001-30,000 USD	5	4.7	15	6.6
	30,001-40,000 USD	16	7.0	13	5.7
	40,001-50,000 USD	18	6.5	21	9.2
	50,001-60,000 USD	27	7.3	23	10.0
	60,001-70,000 USD	25	4.9	16	7.0
	70,001-80,000 USD	28	9.9	9	3.9
	80,001-90,000 USD	19	7.6	13	5.7
	90,001-100,000 USD	38	7.0	16	7.0
	More than 100k USD	29	33.3	54	23.6

Table 6. Income data for Serbia

		Serbia	
		N	%
Income Level	5k EUR or less	35	35.7
	5,001-10,000 EUR	20	20.4
	10,001-20,000 EUR	15	15.3
	20,001-30,000 EUR	4	4.1
	30,001-40,000 EUR	6	6.1
	40,001-50,000 EUR	3	3.1
	More than 60k EUR	7	7.1

Figure 1. Multiple Correspondence Analysis Plot

